

**Diane Turner & Associates**

1525 LaFrenz Road  
Liberty, Mo. 64068  
(816) 781-3306  
Fax: (816) 415-8312  
dta@kcnet.com

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The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 – 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20544

**Re: EchoStar/DIRECTV merger  
FCC Docket # 01-348**

Dear Mr. Powell:

When does a merger promote competition? When it gives a new technology the marketplace foothold needed to take on an entrenched monopoly.

Such a pro-competitive merger is pending (Docket # 01-348) before the FCC and DOJ. The merger between EchoStar and Hughes Electronics (DIRECTV), by freeing up spectrum that the two companies currently use for duplicative programs, will enable the new EchoStar to offer greatly expanded Direct Broadcast Satellite services – thus competing more effectively with the cable companies that currently control some 80% of the pay TV market, thanks to their government franchises.

In addition to providing high-definition TV programming, pay-per-view and video-on-demand services, educational, specialty and foreign language programming and other new product offerings, the merged EchoStar will be able to provide meaningful competition with cable in high-speed, broadband Internet services. This capability will go a long way toward bridging the “digital divide” that keeps most rural residents from fully joining the Information Age. Cable companies are understandably reluctant to invest in the expensive installation of cable necessary for each rural customer, but EchoStar service requires only the installation of a small satellite dish on the customer’s roof.

The efficiencies created by the merger will make the new EchoStar substantially more competitive with cable, which creates a market-based constraint on cable pricing. All in all, this merger is a classic win-win situation for consumers, who will benefit from increased competition and easier access to Direct Broadcast Satellite service. I hope you will support it.

Yours truly,

Diane Turner Dressler